

NGO Policy Statement for CSD 15: a new paradigm

Because of unabated global reliance on fossil fuels and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, progress in promoting sustainable development will be rendered impossible within this CSD cycle's four themes: energy for sustainable development, climate change, atmospheric pollution and industrial development. The combustion of fossil fuels is a key driver for climate change and atmospheric pollution. Fossil fuel reliance is also causing increased external indebtedness for the least developed countries. Lack of access to decentralised modern energy services, favouring renewables is a key obstacle to a just and sustainable development, including industrial development.

Based on the precautionary principle, promoting sustainable development safeguarding the environment and promoting social equity we need:

...in energy for sustainable development –

1. a just transition from fossil fuels and nuclear energy towards accessible and affordable energy alternatives including energy efficiency and energy savings to achieve real sustainable development.
2. an equitable and just access to energy services to fulfil basic needs and develop energy policies with time bound targets and commitments, as an integrated element of the PRSPs and/or NSSD, focusing on the poor to ensure greatest impacts and institutionalising citizen involvement to meet citizen and business needs in a sustainable fashion.
3. a transfer of existing and new energy technologies, excluding harmful nuclear ones, to those countries in need, while respecting and/or strengthening local and regional capacities and culture.
4. an immediate shift in energy funding and investment to phasing out subsidies to fossil fuel and nuclear industries in order to "level the playing field". These subsidies dramatically hamper sustainable development and therefore should be redirected to renewable energy and energy efficiency funding, including access to energy for the poor.
5. to develop a comprehensive strategy on finance, redirecting the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their funds to sustainable energy including the introduction of strengthened micro-financing for new Renewables and energy efficiency.
6. to recognize and phase out Export Credit Agencies support by 2008 for funding promoting fossil, nuclear and hydro energy production that do not, inter alia, comply with recommendations of the World Commission on Dams and instruct all IFIs to do likewise.
7. to halt the development of nuclear facilities as they are neither safe, nor environmentally and economically sound and sustainable.
8. to set sustainability criteria for energy production and consumption, including the use of bioenergy to avoid negative effects on food security, livelihood, biodiversity and the widening of the gap between the haves and have-nots .

...in industrial development

9. to emphasise that industrial development does NOT automatically lead to sustainable development and poverty reduction, but standards of sustainable production and consumption must be the basis upon which all industries are based. They must be set within the limits of the earth's carrying capacity, sharing equitably the burdens of the ecological footprint and internalising the external costs, respecting the polluter pays principle.
10. to stimulate sustainability reporting within the private sector, by developing clear indicators to monitor and guide sustainable industrial development. All large enterprises should utilize principles of corporate responsibility and accountability to ensure open communication and transparency, also with respect to ownership and decision making.

11. to develop short production and consumption chains to avoid unnecessary transport, with added value to manufacturer.
12. to implement the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the JPOI by ensuring that benefits from industrial development in the South remain in the South, and by avoiding at all costs, negative consequences such as pollution, waste dumping, low salaries, bad working circumstances. Industrial development in richer countries cannot be based on the exploitation of the poorer ones.

...in air pollution and atmosphere

13. to promote clean public transport alternatives. Vehicles, particularly those driven by diesel engines, are the main cause of urban air pollution. Cities that have taken decisive steps to curb transport-related air pollution have introduced innovative measures such as mandatory replacement of diesel with CNG or congestion fees and public transport alternatives.
14. to develop an 'indoor clean-air' health/environment policy. These policies must include access to affordable, cleaner and environment-friendly cooking and heating facilities. such as efficient, smokeless and cleaner-burning biomass stoves, biogas and solar cookers. Policies should include the promotion of simple technologies to allow for greater ventilation of smoke from indoor fires. Environmental and social impact assessments should also be used when promoting such technologies.
15. to make available an adequate technology to curb burning of garbage from local heaps and national land fills and outlaw incineration of garbage emitting toxic fumes.

...in climate change

16. to hold all member countries accountable to the commitments in the Kyoto Protocol and not allow non-members to direct progress. It is essential to promote early benefits implicit in the protocol concerning transformation of global energy systems in areas such as: job generation, market opportunities, reduced emissions and greater energy self-reliance.
17. to stabilize the climate by keeping man-made climate change well below 2°C as a global average. Hence no country can claim post 2012 Kyoto negotiation privileges, but allocation of emission rights should be based on equitable principles. Action is needed immediately to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases while simultaneously meet the demands of the MDGs.
18. to support most vulnerable and poor communities in their efforts to adapt to climate change.
19. to prevent the transfer of costs for mitigation to developing countries through the Clean Development Mechanisms, supporting the development of socially and environmentally sound CDM projects that respect the 'gold standard'.

...in interlinkages

20. to achieve Good Governance, including respect for social justice, human rights, gender equality, democratic institutions and sustainable policies.
21. to make financial instruments of governments more effective in promoting sustainable policies and inter alia, implement Environmental Fiscal Reforms (EFR), as suggested by OECD guidelines.
22. to improve system-wide coherence (within and outside the UN system) and achieve compatibility within international institutions in line with Agenda 21 and JPOI.
23. to include education for sustainable development in all curricula, as sustainable development is not possible without awareness and contribution of current and future generations.